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**JOINT BULLETIN NO. 2**

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**STRONG BONDS RESILIENCY PROGRAM**

1. **PURPOSE.** The Strong Bonds Program reinforces relationships and is a key resiliency program for Commanders. Strong Bonds is designed to assist Commanders in building, strengthening, preserving and restoring National Guard families. The core mission of the Strong Bonds Program is to increase individual soldier, airman and family member readiness through relationship education and skills training. Strong Bonds remains one of the National Guard's premier opportunities to help with the reduction of stressors within relationships and for fostering resiliency within National Guard families.

2. **OBJECTIVE.** Strong Bonds is a combat multiplier. Statistics show that Strong Bonds is a vital and necessary program. Currently, the majority of National Guard soldiers and Airmen are married. With increasing demands placed on families, soldiers and airmen, including frequent deployments and relocations, intimate relationships are tested and many marriages end in divorce. Research shows that training in communication, intimacy and conflict management increases marriage satisfaction significantly, thereby providing stabilization across the National Guard.

3. **APPLICABILITY.**

a. **Army National Guard members** can attend in any military status approved by their commander. For example, a commander may place a soldier in SUTA status with authorized travel format 400. SUTA status will be for four (4) Periods for the weekend. All Army National Guard orders must state that the service member is required to remain overnight and government meals will be provided. POV mileage is not authorized for military personnel due to the spouses receiving this entitlement. If for some reason the soldier cannot attend in SUTA status, then the soldier will be paid ADOS from Family Programs, if available, for the seminar. This must be stipulated on the RFO.

b. **Air National Guard members** can attend in any military status approved by their commander. For example, a commander may place an airman in RUTA status. RUTA status will be for four (4) Periods for the weekend. All Air National Guard orders must state that the service member is required to remain overnight and government meals will be provided. POV

mileage is not authorized for military personnel due to the spouses receiving this entitlement. If for some reason the airman cannot attend in RUTA status the airman will be paid ADOS/AT for the seminar.

4. **SCHEDULING.** Attendees will register Friday evening. Saturday session will begin at 8:30 a.m. The conference will conclude on Sunday.

5. **EXPECTATIONS OF ATTENDEES.** Couples are expected to participate in the general session Saturday, remain overnight, and attend the Sunday session. All workshops will be limited to 50 people.

6. **EXPENSES.** All rooms and meals will be provided. Travel vouchers will be completed before participants leave the workshop on Sunday. Incidental expenses, such as room service, telephone calls etc., must be paid for by the service member/spouse. Military members will require command approval and coordination to participate in a military status for pay purposes.

7. **DRESS CODE.** Dress code for all participants is civilian, casual attire.

8. Information about the Strong Bonds Program, registration forms, upcoming dates and locations can be found online at: [www.state.nj.us/military/familysupport/](http://www.state.nj.us/military/familysupport/)

9. POC is Chaplain, Major Yaakov Bindell, 609-562-0617

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